

Important Things You Should Know About Internships

1. Most internships that interest our students are readily approved by the Department. However, EMST 5010 is an important course in our academic curriculum, and the Department exercises quality control over the content of our internship course just as it does over all the courses you take in your major. The standards for approving credit outlined above are designed to insure that you learn as much about your major in your internship as you do in any other course you take in the Department. You are NOT entitled to receive credit towards your degree in this major for any internship you may want to take.
2. Some internship providers pay interns. That's fine with the Department. Receiving departmental academic credit for an internship does not preclude also being paid.
3. For-profit companies that do not pay interns must require those interns to be receiving academic credit for the internship. If a for-profit company does not pay interns and those interns are not receiving academic credit, then the company is a violation of federal labor laws. That's why most companies require interns to certify that they are receiving credit from a university or other academic institutions.
4. Federal labor laws also specify what interns can and cannot be asked to do on the job. Interns receiving credit in lieu of pay must be given meaningful and academically relevant experiences during the internship. They cannot, for example, be assigned duties such as janitorial work or mailroom work as a primary part of their responsibilities. Nor can an intern be assigned work that replaces a paid employee. Although such negative experiences are rare among our students, they have happened. If you believe you're being asked to do inappropriate work as a major part of your internship, contact the Department Head immediately to discuss the situation.
5. Non-profit agencies can employ volunteers without wither paying them or requiring them to receive credit. Typically, non-profit organizations offer our students internships because they need our students' communication expertise—because the organization doesn't have it itself. For this reason, the Department does not approve credit for internships with non-profit organizations that are not, themselves, media organization such as PBS, NPR, ProPublica, etc. However, if you want to work for a non-profit and gain experience from your own efforts managing some part of their communication operations, then we encourage you to do so. Although we will not allow you to receive academic credit for the experience, there is nothing stopping you from volunteering to do the work anyway. If you believe it will be valuable for you personally and professionally, you should be willing to invest in your own development, credit or no credit.

6. **DO NOT APPLY FOR AN INTERNSHIP THAT WILL REQUIRE YOU TO RECEIVE CREDIT BEFORE YOU ARE SURE YOU WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE CREDIT** for the internship. You will not be eligible unless you have completed EMST 3010, EMST 3210/3210L and EMST 3510.
 - a. Every year, a few students assume that if they are offered a top internship, the Department will give in and let them sign up for EMST 5010, even though they're not eligible. Wrong. Don't be one of those who has to crawl back to the Internship Coordinator at CNN, CBS, ESPN, DreamWorks, or some other dream-job media company and say you have to turn down their internship offer after all because you can't get academic credit. Interns from our Department have a reputation in the industry of being brilliantly prepared. Only those students we know ARE prepared will be approved for internships.

7. Most internships are wonderful experiences. On rare occasions, however, a student will experience problems on the job: An ongoing conflict with the boss or another employee; harassment or bullying by a supervisor, company employee, or fellow intern; inappropriate work assignments, etc.

As your professor for EMST 5010, I am your internship mentor. If you experience any problems or situations in your internship that concern you or make you feel uncomfortable, please contact me immediately through Ms. Christopher at 706.542.3785; cherylch@uga.edu (office 104-A)

When you contact me, you and I will discuss the situation and try together to develop strategies for dealing with it. I assure you that we will proceed together to ensure the best outcome for your internship.

However, in the event that you are harassed, threatened, or bullied during an internship, or otherwise become the subject of unwanted or inappropriate behavior by a supervisor, colleague, or other person in the organization, you are required to contact me immediately and let me know of the situation.

Again, you and I will discuss the circumstances and develop an appropriate response together. Again, such experiences are very rare. But if they do have a problem while on the job, I can't help you, if I don't know you need. Please contact me immediately.

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